

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 18, 27, 31, and 40 to read as follows. A marked-up copy of the amended claims, showing the changes made thereto, is attached.

18. (Amended) An optical scanning apparatus comprising:

a laser unit having a laser source and an optical element configured to emit a substantially parallel beam of light;

an incident optical system arranged to direct the light beam emerging from the laser unit to strike an optical deflector while maintaining a width of the light beam wider than a width of a deflecting surface of the optical deflector in a main scanning direction; and

an imaging optical system for forming the light beam deflected by the optical deflector into an image on a scanned surface,

wherein said laser unit is adapted to be shifted in a predetermined direction with respect to an optical axis of said incident optical system.

27. (Amended) An apparatus according to claim 18, wherein a tilt angle of the laser source in the main scanning direction is set to not more than $\pm 2.5^\circ$ with respect to the optical axis of the laser unit.

31. (Amended) A method for performing optical scanning using an optical scanning apparatus including a laser unit having a laser source and an optical element configured to emit a substantially parallel beam of light, an incident optical system

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end

arranged to direct the light beam emerging from the laser unit to strike an optical deflector while maintaining a width of the light beam wider than a width of a deflecting surface of the optical deflector in a main scanning direction, and an imaging optical system for forming the light beam deflected by the optical deflector into an image on a scanned surface, the method comprising the step of:

shifting the laser unit in a predetermined direction with respect to an optical axis of the incident optical system.

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40. (Amended) The method according to claim 31, wherein a tilt angle of the laser source in the main scanning direction is set to not more than $\pm 2.5^\circ$ with respect to the optical axis of the laser unit.

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 and 18-43 remain pending, of which Claims 1-16 have been allowed. Claims 1, 14, 18, and 31 are in independent form. Claims 18, 27, 31, and 40 have been amended to even further clarify the claimed subject matter.

Claims 20, 23, 26, 28, 29/20, 29/23, 29/26, 29/28, 30/20, 30/23, 30/26, 30/28, 33, 36, 39, 41, 42/33, 42/36, 42/39, 42/41, 43/33, 43/36, 43/39, and 43/41 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and with no change in scope. Those claims have not been so rewritten herein, since, for the reasons given below, the base claim from which each depends is believed allowable.